

Department of the Navy, DoD

§ 775.5

effect on the quality of the human environment and for which an EIS will not be prepared.

(5) Approve and forward to the Navy JAG, for publishing in the FEDERAL REGISTER, a Record of Decision (ROD) which will summarize for the public record the decision made by the Navy/Marine Corps among the alternatives presented in a Final EIS.

(6) Maintain liaison with the Chief of Information who will coordinate with the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) those environmental matters which have significant public affairs implications.

(7) Maintain liaison with the Office of Legislative Affairs who will coordinate with the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative Affairs) and the Congress those environmental matters which have significant legislative implications.

(b) The Chief of Naval Operations, or his designee(s), and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, or his designee(s), are responsible, within their respective services, for NEPA compliance, which includes:

(1) Implementing DON policy regarding protection of the environment to include NEPA compliance.

(2) Advising commands of the requirement for submitting environmental assessments or impact statements and identifying major decision points in the chain of command where environmental effects shall be considered.

(3) Making decisions on environmental assessments as to whether a Finding of No Significant Impact is appropriate or preparation of an environmental impact statement is required.

(4) Coordinating, as appropriate, with CEQ, EPA, DASD(E), ASN(I&E), other DOD components and federal agencies concerned with environmental matters.

(5) Serving as the point of contact for DON environmental matters.

(6) Coordinating, as appropriate, with the Chief of Information for the release to the public of environmental assessments, impact statements, Findings of No Significant Impact, and other environmental documents, according to the Freedom of Information Act and other applicable federal laws.

(7) Providing assistance for actions initiated by private persons, state or local agencies and other non-DON/DOD entities for which DON involvement may be reasonably foreseen.

(8) Ensuring that relevant environmental documentation accompanies all proposals for action through the appropriate review process so that such information is available to the decision maker.

(c) The Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps are to comply with these procedures by subsequently directing subordinates to:

(1) Ensure all appropriate instructions, directives, and orders include the requirement for funding and planning for environmental documentation, as required.

(2) Conduct analyses of the environmental effects of current and proposed actions in accordance with DOD regulations, CEQ regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), and other applicable regulations.

(3) Encourage, to the extent practicable, citizen participation in environmental evaluations of projects or programs.

(4) Evaluate environmental impacts at initial planning stages and at each following significant step or decision milestone in the development of a project or program, as warranted.

§ 775.5 Classified actions.

(a) The fact that a proposed action is of a classified nature does not relieve the proponent of the action from complying with NEPA and the CEQ regulations. Therefore, environmental documents shall be prepared, safeguarded and disseminated in accordance with the requirements applicable to classified information. When feasible, these documents shall be organized in such a manner that classified portions are included as appendices so that unclassified portions can be made available to the public. Review of classified NEPA documentation will be coordinated with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to fulfill requirements of section 309 of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7609 *et seq.*).

(b) It should be noted that a classified EA/EIS serves the same "informed decisionmaking" purpose as does a

published unclassified EA/EIS. Even though the classified EA/EIS does not undergo general public review and comment, it must still be part of the information package to be considered by the decisionmaker for the proposed action. The content of a classified EA/EIS (or the classified portion of a public EA/EIS) will therefore meet the same content requirements applicable to a published unclassified EA/EIS.

§ 775.6 Planning considerations.

(a) When integrating the NEPA process into early stages of proposed actions, action proponents will determine as early as possible the appropriate level of documentation required under NEPA, i.e., is the action a major federal action significantly affecting the human environment requiring an environmental impact statement (EIS), is the action one for which the impacts are not known or which may not be significant and, therefore, an environmental assessment (EA), is appropriate, or is the action one that has no potential for significant impacts and can be categorically excluded from further NEPA documentation. In addition, CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1501.5 and 1501.6) require early identification of lead and cooperative agencies for preparation of an EIS for which more than one agency is involved or has special expertise in environmental issues to be addressed in the EIS.

(b) The command responsible for preparation of the appropriate documentation may prepare an EA on any action at any time in order to assist in planning and decisionmaking, including the decision whether or not to prepare an EIS. If a determination is made based on information presented in an environmental assessment that an EIS is not required, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be prepared and made available to the public in accordance with CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1506.6).

(c) CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1508.18(a)) define major federal actions subject to evaluation under NEPA to include, among other things, "new and continuing activities". The term *new activities* is intended to encompass future actions, i.e., those which are not ongoing at the time of the proposal.

The term *continuing activities* which may necessitate the preparation of a NEPA document will be applied by the Department of Navy to include activities which are presently being carried out in fulfillment of the Navy mission and function, including existing training functions, where:

(1) The currently occurring environmental effects of which have not been previously evaluated in a NEPA document, and there is a discovery that substantial environmental degradation is occurring, or is likely to occur, as a result of ongoing operations (e.g., a discovery that significant beach erosion is occurring as a result of continuing amphibious exercises, new designation of wetland habitat, or discovery of an endangered species residing in the area of the activity), or

(2) There is a discovery that the environmental effects of an ongoing activity are significantly and qualitatively different or more severe than predicted in a NEPA document prepared in connection with the commencement of the activity.

A substantial change in a continuing activity (such as a substantial change in operational tempo, area of use, or in methodology/equipment) which has the potential for significant environmental impacts should be considered a proposal for a new action and be documented accordingly. Preparation of a NEPA document is not a necessary prerequisite, nor a substitute, for compliance with other environmental laws.

(d) Where emergency circumstances require immediate action, for the protection of lives and for public health and safety, which could result in significant harm to the environment, the activity Commanding Officer or his designee shall report the emergency action to CNO (OP-44E)/CMC (LFL) who will facilitate the appropriate consultation with CEQ as soon as practicable.

(e) CEQ regulations provide for the establishment of categorical exclusions (40 CFR 1508.4) for those actions which, after consideration by the Department of the Navy, have been found not to have a significant effect on the human environment, individually or cumulatively, under normal circumstances, and for which, therefore, neither an EA